'Neath Saint Michael's Shield

by the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

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Devotion to Saint Michael, Most Suitable for Our Times

Lucifer has placed his stamp upon the present age. Open and secret revolt against God and His Church, the spirit of criticism, unbelief and immorality are rampant. The haughty and insolent boast of Lucifer, "I will be like the Most High!" is re-echoed today throughout the world. Puffed up with their discoveries and their progress in material science, men are loudly proclaiming their self-sufficiency and denying the existence of a Supreme Being. Governments and secret societies, plotting against God and striving to blot out from homes and schools, from offices and factories, all traces of Christianity, show plainly under whose standard they are assembled. Never before in the history of the world were the rights of God so blasphemously mocked and denied, or the rights of man so arrogantly asserted, as they are today.

As a remedy against these frightful evils, we are urged to invoke the aid of that glorious prince of heaven who rendered all glory to God by conquering Lucifer and casting him into the abyss. "In our times," writes Cardinal Mermillod, "when the very foundation of society is shaken in consequence of having denied the rights of God, it is necessary that we revive the veneration of Saint Michael

and with him raise the victorious cry: **Who is like unto God?**"

Three centuries ago, Saint Francis de Sales wrote: "Veneration of Saint Michael is the great remedy against despising the rights of God, against insubordination, skepticism and infidelity," - vices which are perhaps more prevalent now than in any previous period of history.

Surely, as Saint Paul warned the early Christians, it is now time for us to "rise from sleep," and to offer vigorous resistance to the enemies of our salvation. The weapons which we must use in this conflict are not the arms of civil warfare, but the spiritual weapons of prayer and penance, increased fidelity to the commandments of God, and frequent reception of the sacraments. And surely it is meet that we choose for our leader in this conflict the same powerful captain who led the faithful angels to victory. Saint Michael is ever ready to champion the cause of righteousness. He is moreover, a powerful helper in every need.

Let us, then, with confident trust, invoke the aid and the protection of this mighty Archangel whose shield bears the inscription: "MI-CHA-EL - Quis ut Dens - Who is like unto God?"

O great Saint Michael, take us 'neath thy shield, Thy mighty power in our favor wield!

Offices of Saint Michael

Prince of the Heavenly Hosts

The Holy Fathers are of the opinion that Saint Michael surpasses in glory and power all the other angels in heaven. Certain it is that he possesses in the highest and most perfect degree all the zeal and the love which is peculiar to the highest seraphim. The quality of *archangel* assigned to Saint Michael does not, according to the words of Saint Peter and Saint Jude Thaddeus, signify that he belongs to the choir of angels designated by that name but rather that he is an angel of *superior* rank. The Church also invokes him as the prince of the angels exercising supreme command over all the heavenly hierarchies.

This position of honor was merited by Saint Michael in the battle which he waged against Lucifer and the rebellious angels before the creation of the world. When God created the angels, those magnificent spirits of light and love which in countless hosts surround His heavenly throne, He bestowed upon them most eminent gifts of nature and of grace. But before admitting them to the enjoyment of the unveiled vision of His glory in heaven. He placed them under probation, just as later He subjected mankind to a trial of obedience in the persons of Adam and Eve. The nature of the trial to which the angels were subjected is not known with certainty. Learned and saintly theologians hold, however, that the Heavenly Father revealed to the angels the future incarnation of His own Divine Son, whom they were to adore in His Sacred Humanity. At the same time He revealed to them the surpassing beauty and dignity of Mary, whom, as the Mother of God, they were to venerate as their Queen.

Lucifer, one of the most glorious and exalted princes of the heavenly court, dazzled by the splendor of the gifts he had received, rebelled at the thought that human nature should be preferred to his own angelic nature. He could not bring himself to acknowledge that a woman inferior to him in nature should at some future time be made his queen, and that the seed of that woman should be preferred to himself for the honor of the hypostatic union. Desiring for himself the prerogatives of the God-man, he raised his great battle-cry of rebellion: will be like unto the Most High!" (Isaiah 14:14)

Enmeshed in this web of pride, one third of the angels joined Lucifer and took up his rebellious cry. But at the same instant another great archangel, equal to the proud Lucifer in beauty and grace, prostrated himself before the throne of God and manifested his allegiance by an act of profound adoration and loyalty. To the cry of the rebellious angels, he opposed the battle cry of love and loyalty: "Mi-cha-el - Who is like unto God?"

The fearlessness and fidelity of this mighty champion roused the courage of the faithful angels, and they rallied to his standard, repeating with one accord his noble cry: "Who is like unto God?" Then followed that tremendous battle between the good and the bad angels which Saint John thus describes in the *Apocalypse*: "And there was a battle in heaven: Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels." (12:7)

Saint Michael and his faithful followers won a glorious victory. With the swiftness of lightning, Lucifer and his companions were transformed into hideous demons and cast out of heaven into the abyss of eternal torment and darkness which God had created for them. In reward for his zeal and fidelity, the holy Archangel Michael was made

prince and commander-in-chief of all the heavenly legions. The angels most willingly and gratefully recognize his supremacy, for, after God, they owe to him their perseverance in grace and their eternal happiness. With loving submission they receive from him their various offices. They are attentive to his slightest wish, because they recognize in his commands and regulations the will of God, their sovereign Lord and King.

Thus does God honor in heaven him whose zeal saved the greater portion of the heavenly court from destruction. Let us look upon this blessed prince of heaven with holy joy. On our part he deserves the name of the "first Christian," for he was the first to recognize and adore the Word-made-flesh and was the first to be illumined by His grace. He was also the "first apostle," because he was the first to announce the Savior to the angelic choirs. He was the "first lieutenant" of Jesus Christ, for he was the first to lead the faithful servants of God to victory against the enemy.

Defender of God's People

The holy Archangel Michael is called the *guardian angel of the people of God*, both in the Old and the New Testament. He is honored as the *herald of the general judgment* and the *guardian of paradise*, because it is his office to lead all the elect into the kingdom of eternal glory.

The world's history is replete with instances of the most tender solicitude of the Archangel Michael for the children of God during the time of their earthly pilgrimage. From the very beginning of time, he commenced to fulfil the office of defender and leader of God's chosen people in the garden of paradise. Saint Ambrose teaches that God commissioned Saint Michael to lead Adam into paradise, to explain to him the purpose of his creation, to guide him and to associate

with him in visible form. After the fall of Adam and Eve, it was the same glorious archangel who stood guard at the gate of paradise with flaming sword, "to keep the way of the tree of life." (Genesis 3:24)

The Fathers of the Church tell us that even though in many instances the name of Saint Michael is not mentioned in Holy Scripture when reference is made to the services of an angel, we may firmly believe that, in his capacity of Divinely-appointed guardian and protector of the chosen people, it was either Saint Michael himself who rendered assistance, or it was his angelic subjects who did so at his command.

It was Saint Michael who communicated to Noe the revelation concerning the deluge. It was through Saint Michael that Abraham was named the father of the chosen people and received the wonderful promise which Holy Church has immortalized in her prayers for the dead: "May the holy standard-bearer, Michael, introduce them into that holy light which Thou didst promise of old to Abraham and his descendants." The angel who appeared to Moses in the burning bush was Saint Michael, according to the teaching of Saint Gregory Nazianzen. It was this mighty angel who performed all the wonders which took place at the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. Likewise, the angel who routed the army of Sennacherib (4 Kings 19:35), and through whom God published the Ten Commandments to the Israelites on Mount Sinai was the holy Archangel Michael.

After the death of Moses, according to an ancient Jewish tradition referred to in the Epistle of Saint Jude (1:9), Saint Michael contended with Satan over the body of the prophet. In obedience to the command of God, Saint Michael concealed the tomb of Moses from the people and also from

Satan who wished to disclose it to the Israelites in order to seduce them to the sin of hero-worship.

God revealed to Saint Michael all the designs of His justice and mercy regarding His chosen people. Of this the prophecies of Daniel and Zacharias bear witness. Finally, it was this great celestial prince who came to the aid of the Israelites and rendered the army of Judas Macchabeus victorious over his enemies.

Even to this day the Jews invoke the holy Archangel Michael as the principal defender of the Synagogue and their protector against their enemies. On the Feast of the Atonement they conclude their prayers with this beautiful invocation: "Michael, prince of mercy, pray for Israel, that it may reign in heaven, in that light which streams forth from the Face of the King who sits upon the throne of mercy."

Protector of the Church

As the chosen people of the Old Law were marvelously protected by Saint Michael, so we may not doubt that this great prince of heaven protects the Church of God in a still more signal manner. Under the New Law, as under the Old, Saint Michael is the "Vicar of the Most High and the Prince of His people," ever prepared to render assistance. With one accord the holy Fathers of the Church teach that *Saint Michael is the guardian angel and the protector of the Catholic Church*.

Time and again, in centuries past, Saint Michael came to the rescue when dreadful wars and persecutions threatened to destroy Christianity. He it was who, at the command of Mary, Queen of Angels, came to the assistance of Constantine the Great in the fourth century, and helped his forces to gain a brilliant victory over the pagan Emperor Maxentius. The

Archangel himself revealed his identity in this instance. Appearing to Constantine after the completion of a beautiful church which the latter had erected to his honor in gratitude, he said: *"I am Michael, the chief of the angelic legions of the Lord of hosts, the protector of the Christian Religion*, who whilst thou wast battling against godless tyrants, placed the weapons in thy hands." This noble edifice, generally known as the *Michaelion*, became the scene of many miracles wrought through the power of the great Archangel.

At later periods, too, Saint Michael proved himself a powerful protector against the invasions of barbarian hordes. The Greek Emperor Justinian I erected six churches in his honor, in grateful recognition of the assistance which he had rendered. In the fifteenth century when the Turks were about to conquer all Europe, Saint Michael, at the command of the Blessed Virgin, again championed the cause of Christianity and gained a glorious victory over the infidels. Saint Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, who in the fifteenth century saved France, ascribed her vocation and her victories to Saint Michael. Three times he appeared to her in heavenly beauty and informed her that she was called to deliver her country.

Thus Saint Michael has proved himself a valiant warrior for the honor of God both in heaven and on earth. By his power he wages incessant war with the archfiend, Satan, in the great kingdom of God upon earth, the Church. Glowing zeal for the honor of God is his distinctive trait and virtue.

The Venerable Anna Catherine Emmerich was frequently granted visions of the past and future combats of the Church. Repeatedly she saw Saint Michael, in the form of a warrior, standing with blood-stained sword above the Church, replacing the sword in his scabbard as a sign of victory. She was also shown how, in the present-day

struggles of the Church, Saint Michael would bring about a most glorious victory. This thought should be consoling to all the faithful Christians who view with alarm the many shafts of persecution now being directed against the Church.

Pope Leo XIII, realizing by Divine enlightenment the present and future struggles of the Church against the powers of hell, felt convinced that through the intervention of Saint Michael, hell would be conquered, and the Church restored to peace and liberty. He, therefore, composed a prayer in honor of the warrior-archangel, and ordered it to be recited daily after low Mass in all the churches throughout the Christian world.

The circumstance which led to this course of action on the part of the saintly Pontiff is said to be as follows: One day, after having celebrated the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the aged Pontiff was in conference with the Cardinals. Suddenly he sank to the floor in a deep swoon. Physicians who hastened to his side feared that he had already expired, for they could find no trace of his pulse. However, after a short interval the Holy Father rallied, and coming to himself exclaimed with great emotion: "Oh, what a horrible picture I was permitted to see!" - He had been shown in spirit the tremendous activities of the evil spirits and their ravings against the Church. But in the midst of this vision of horror he had beheld the consoling visions of the glorious Archangel Michael, who had appeared and cast Satan and his legions back into the abyss of hell. Soon afterward he composed the well-known prayer: "Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil. . ." Daily this powerful petition rises heavenward from thousands of Catholic sanctuaries throughout the world, and we may believe that in answer to this fervent plea the great

Archangel hastens to the aid of the Bride of Christ, the Church, in her many afflictions.

The Church has special need of the powerful protection of Saint Michael in our perilous times. On all sides she is being assailed by strong and bitter enemies. In one country after another we behold the sad spectacle of religious persecution rising to an ever higher pitch of hatred and insolence. Surely the terrible crimes which have been committed in recent times and are still being committed against the Church, both in her sanctuaries and her members, are instigated by the devil, for no human mind could be base enough to conceive and put into execution such hideous outrages. The Church looks to Saint Michael for aid that she may triumph over her persecutors, and that the gates of hell may not prevail against her.

Assuredly, Saint Michael will not fail to come to the aid of Holy Church in our days, as he did in days of old, if we fervently and confidently implore him to do so. We know, indeed, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church, for Christ our Lord has promised to be with her till the end of time. Nevertheless, God wills that we do our part in defending her cause. He might have cast the rebel angels out of heaven by a single act of His will, but He chose rather to send against them His armies of loyal spirits, under the leadership of the great Saint Michael. So, too, in the present critical times. He could confound the enemies of the Church by merely willing to do so. But He wills rather, that we should co-operate in her defense, under the leadership of the great captain of the heavenly hosts. Let us, therefore, most earnestly implore Saint Michael to put an end to the persecutions which are assailing the Church in so many lands, and to the activities of the evil spirit which are ruining so many souls.

Helper and Defender of Christians

Besides the protection which the glorious Archangel Michael extends to the Church at large, he is also the protector of every individual Christian and of all Christian nations. How fortunate we are in having so powerful an advocate! Surely, never so urgently as at the present time have Catholics needed Saint Michael's help to remain steadfast in their Faith. Unbelief has carried its insolence to the very limit, and boldly proclaims that there is no God. Blasphemy against Jesus Christ, against His mysteries and His doctrines has increased in the most frightful manner. It is our duty to be faithful Catholics, to confess our Faith openly and energetically, and to preserve a glowing, invincible love for Jesus Christ.

Saint Michael is the conqueror of Satan. Under his leadership, let us unfurl everywhere the banner of the Catholic Faith and have no fear of godlessness. In a thousand secret ways, Satan plots and wars against God and tries to usurp His throne. Let us keep the kingdom of our heart firmly closed against him, that he may never reign therein by sin. When the spirit of darkness incites us to thoughts of pride or rebellion, let us answer him with Saint Michael: "*Who is like unto God?* Who am I, a creature of dust and ashes, the fleeting phantom of an hour, in comparison with God?" When Satan tries to seduce us to commit this or that sin; when in alluring pictures he presents to us the pleasures and attractions of this world; when he promises us honors, riches, happiness, on condition that we break a commandment, omit a good work, or commit an evil deed; when he tempts us to give way to murmuring and impatience, and to find fault with the inscrutable ways of Divine Providence; when the siren song of sinful pleasures sounds in our ears, filling our hearts with unholy longings and crowding our fancy with forbidden sights and scenes; let

us ever oppose the tempter with the same energetic words: "*Who is like unto God?* What can I do without God's help? How poor and repulsive are all earthly pleasures in comparison with the joy and peace of a pure heart which loves God and will one day possess Him forever? What can fill and satisfy my heart save God alone? God is my only treasure, my highest Good." If, in times of temptation, we entertain thoughts such as these and invoke the aid of our heavenly leader, Saint Michael will unfailingly come to our assistance and put the enemy to flight. But if we wish to enjoy Saint Michael's protection, we must also imitate his virtues, particularly his humility and his zeal for God's glory.

"Our whole life," says Saint Bernard, "is a continuous temptation," a truth which he drew from Holy Scripture. We have to battle against foes who are mighty in power, cruel in their vengefulness, fearful in their craftiness, countless in their number, tireless in their persecutions. They are spirits who deal blows without being seen, who intrude everywhere, who see everything that we do, while remaining invisible to us. And they battle with weak persons who wander in darkness, on slippery paths, surrounded by frightful abysses, wherein one falls into unspeakable misery. With furious rage these enemies have sworn to avenge themselves upon us, because God has called us to occupy the thrones left vacant by them. They are bent upon making us eternally miserable like themselves. And, what is more, they are not merely intent upon depriving us of temporal life, which sooner or later we must lose anyway, nor upon robbing us of temporal goods or honors, but they are bent upon the eternal ruin of our *souls*. They are determined to deprive us of an *eternal kingdom* and of *endless happiness*. They seek to plunge our souls into torments such as no mortal man has ever suffered or human mind has ever imagined. Oh, that mankind would truly take to heart this frightful truth! The Blessed Virgin is said to have complained

bitterly to Mary of Agreda of the indifference of mankind toward these frightful enemies.

The number of the demons is incredible. Saint Anthony said repeatedly that *millions* of evil spirits were roaming about the world. The revelations of Venerable Anna Catherine Emmerich say that if the evil spirits in the air had bodies, the sun would be darkened by them, so great is their number. And the influence which these evil spirits wield is tremendous. Could we but see into the realms of the invisible, doubtless we should be astounded to learn how great an influence they exercise over world events.

Yet we need not despair in the face of the dangers to which we are exposed, for God has given us a defender more powerful by far than the spirits of darkness. This defender is none other than the holy Archangel Michael, whom we are taught to invoke daily and whom in the prayer of the Church we daily implore to "drive into hell Satan and the other evil spirits who roam about the world seeking the destruction of souls." Oh, how great ought to be our devotion to this great Archangel, and how ardent our fervor in reciting this prayer!

Viewing the situation in the spirit of faith, we cannot deny that the great evils which now afflict the world will never be amended without prayer and penance. Yet even Catholics have lost sight of this truth. They pray for the cure of the sick, for success in their undertakings, and for many other personal intentions, but not enough, or not at all, *for the cessation of the prevailing moral evils*, which mean triumph for Satan and ruin for the Church and for souls. The beautiful prayer given on page 61, also propagated by Pope Leo XIII, deserves to be taken to the hearts of all Catholics and recited by them frequently and even daily. The prayer is somewhat lengthy, yet the few additional minutes required for its recitation will be excellently well spent. It is peculiarly

applicable to our times and presents in complete form the needs of all Christendom. The daily recitation of this prayer would be an excellent form of *Catholic Action*, and would be a powerful means of bringing about a cessation of the dreadful evils which now threaten to engulf the whole world.

The life of Saint Oringa records this incident of the protection she experienced from Saint Michael, the Archangel: One day the saint, in company with several other maidens, started on a pilgrimage in honor of Saint Michael to Monte Gargano, in Italy. The journey extended over a number of days. On the way, the little company was joined by a few men who feigned to be pilgrims and excellent guides. The men seemed to be very pious and cunningly kept up an edifying conversation till evening. In reality, however, they were robbers, in disguise, who had evil designs regarding the virgins and led them directly to their den. Suddenly there appeared to the maidens a youth of heavenly beauty who called out in a powerful voice: "Flee from here, your souls are in danger!"

For the moment the robbers were paralyzed with terror. In the meantime, the noble youth guided the maidens to a safe lodging at some distance from the den. Later it was revealed to Saint Oringa during prayer that the rescuer of herself and her companions was none other than Saint Michael, the Archangel.

Heavenly Physician

In the early ages of the Church, devotion to Saint Michael was very popular. The early Christians invoked him especially for the cure of their sick. Tradition relates that in the earliest ages, Saint Michael caused a medicinal spring to spout at Chairotopa near Colossae, and all the sick who bathed there, invoking the Blessed Trinity and Saint Michael,

were cured. Still more famous are the springs which Saint Michael is said to have drawn from the rock at Colossae. The pagans directed a stream against the sanctuary of Saint Michael to destroy it, but the Archangel split the rock by lightning to give a new bed to the stream and sanctified forever the waters which came from the gorge.

At Constantinople, likewise, Saint Michael was the great heavenly physician. The Christians of Egypt placed their life-giving river, the Nile, under the protection of Saint Michael.

In Rome, also, the role of heavenly physician was assigned to Saint Michael. During the pontificate of Saint Gregory the Great, a terrible pestilence depopulated the city of Rome. The Sovereign Pontiff ordered a penitential procession during which he himself carried a statue of the Blessed Virgin. Eighty persons died in the ranks of the procession itself. Still the Pope continued the prayers. When theyii, arrived at the bridge crossing the Tiber, they heard the song of angels in the skies. Suddenly above the castle of Saint Angelo, Saint Michael appeared in gigantic size. In his right hand he held a sword which he thrust into the scabbard. At the same moment the pestilence ceased.

The celebrated sanctuary of Mont-Saint-Michael in Normandy, France, has likewise been the scene of many marvelous cures wrought through the intercession of the great Archangel. During the middle ages, this mount was one of Europe's most renowned places of pilgrimage. This sanctuary owes its origin to an apparition of Saint Michael to Saint Aubert, Bishop of Avranches, during the eighth century. Appearing to the holy Bishop, the Archangel pointed out to him a tall cliff extending out into the sea, telling him that this spot was under his special protection and requesting that a church be built there to his honor. An imposing church was erected on a rocky mount, at the cost

of great hardships and difficulties, and here the glorious Archangel testified to the truth of the apparition by effecting many and wonderful cures. Twelve blind persons had their sight restored and many sick were cured of their diseases. From that time forward the Archangel Michael was highly venerated throughout France.

Up to the time of Charles XI, every Frankish king made a pilgrimage to this mount. Here Charlemagne dedicated his mighty kingdom to the Archangel. The church, with its adjoining monastery, has a view far out over the sea, and its many steeples give it the appearance of a fortress. During the French revolution the monastery was converted into a central prison, and from that time the pilgrimages to the shrine ceased. During the past few decades, however, the veneration of Saint Michael at this sanctuary has been given a new impetus, and large pilgrimages are once more ascending the holy mount to honor God through His glorious Archangel. The Abbey is in the charge of Benedictine monks.

From the history of Mont-Saint-Michael and Monte Gargano it is evident that pilgrimages are pleasing to the great Archangel, and that special graces are obtained by those who honor him in this manner. However, as but few persons are in a position to make pilgrimages to such celebrated shrines, one may instead visit any church or chapel, or even a picture of the Archangel. If such visits are repeated several times, or even *nine times* by way of a *novena*, and are united with assistance at Holy Mass and the reception of Holy Communion, one may with full confidence expect the aid of the holy Archangel even in the gravest necessities.

Advocate of the Dying

Not only during life does the glorious Archangel Michael defend and protect souls, but he is especially their advocate

and consoler at the hour of death. When the last hour of our earthly career draws near, and we are confronted by that awful moment when our soul must leave the body which it has loved so much, to pass through the narrow portal of death, satanic hosts, like raving lions, will make a last attack upon our souls. But we will not need to fear if during life we have been faithful in venerating Saint Michael and in imploring his aid for the hour of death. In that hour of supreme need, this invincible Archangel, ever ready to assist the faithful soul, will come to our aid with his glorious hosts and battle for us. He will cover us with his strong shield and lead us safely through the midst of our enemies.

And when at length our soul has been freed from its earthly bonds, he will conduct us to the judgment seat of Christ, where he will undertake our defense and implore the forgiveness of our sins. And finally, if we have merited to be numbered among the elect, he will take us beneath his glorious banner and conduct us to the blessed home of light where all the angels and elect children of God glory in the eternal praise of their Creator. It is therefore a very commendable practice daily to invoke Saint Michael to lend his assistance at the critical hour of death. Many are the faithful clients of Saint Michael who have experienced his help in that hour.

Among the writings of Saint Alphonsus Liguori we find the following account of Saint Michael's assistance at the hour of death: A certain Polish gentleman had for many years led a wicked life. When the hour of death approached he was filled with terror and tortured by remorse of conscience over his former recklessness, so that he was reduced to a state of utter despair. No amount of exhortation or encouragement had any effect upon him; he refused absolutely every spiritual consolation.

This unhappy man, however, still had some veneration for Saint Michael, and God in His mercy permitted the holy Archangel to appear to him in his last struggle. Saint Michael encouraged him to repentance and said that he had prayed and obtained for him sufficient time to regulate the affairs of his soul. Shortly afterwards, two Dominican priests came to the house, saying that a stranger had sent them. The sick man recognized this as the work of Saint Michael. He confessed his sins amid tears of repentance, received Holy Communion with touching devotion, and breathed forth his soul with every indication of being truly reconciled with God.

Consoler of the Poor Souls

In her beautiful prayers in the Mass for the Dead, the Church with maternal solicitude places the souls of her departed children in the hands of Saint Michael, that he may lead them into the kingdom of everlasting light. If Saint Michael is so solicitous for the welfare of souls during their lifetime and at the hour of death, we may be certain that he will also befriend them during their stay in purgatory, and will hasten to bring them consolation.

A Cistercian monk, after his death, appeared to one of his friends, a priest, and told him he would be delivered from purgatory if during Holy Mass the priest would recommend his soul to Saint Michael. The priest complied with this desire, and he, together with others who were present, had the consolation of seeing the soul of his friend taken up to heaven by the Archangel.

It is related that a certain priest, whilst one day offering the Holy Sacrifice for the dead, recommended some souls in a particular manner when pronouncing the words: "May the Prince of the angels, Saint Michael, lead them into the glory

of heaven." At the same time he saw the glorious Archangel descend from heaven into purgatory to deliver those souls and to conduct them into paradise.

Let us be encouraged by these examples frequently to invoke the assistance of Saint Michael in behalf of our departed loved ones, and in particular to recommend them to his powerful intercession during the celebration of Holy Mass.

"The Prince of the heavenly militia," says Saint Anselm, "is all-powerful in purgatory, and he can assist the poor souls whom the Justice and Sanctity of the Almighty retain in this place of punishment." "It is incontestably recognized since the foundation of Christianity," Saint Robert Bellarmine declares, "that the souls of the faithful departed are delivered from purgatory through the intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel." Let us add to these authorities the words of Saint Alphonsus Liguori: "Saint Michael has received the care of consoling and helping the souls in purgatory."

Guardian of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Pope

When the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man, the sublime office of guarding the Savior during the thirty-three years of His earthly life fell to God's zealous advocate, Saint Michael. This is the pious belief of eminent Doctors and theologians. And since the Ark of the Covenant has been replaced by the Tabernacle, Saint Michael guards the Blessed Eucharist and keeps watch over the thousands of tabernacles and altars scattered throughout the world. Even so, he zealously guards and protects Christ's Vicar upon earth, the reigning Pope.

It has been revealed to various saints that the great Archangel is the special guardian of the Blessed Sacrament; that he accompanies It everywhere - in the hands of the priest, upon the throne of exposition, in the tabernacle, when borne in procession, on Its obscure visits to the sick, or wherever the love of the Divine Victim may cause It to be borne. Day and night he keeps faithful vigil before the Tabernacle, in loving adoration.

At the beginning of Holy Mass, his name is mentioned in the confession of faults made by the priest at the foot of the altar, and by the faithful in turn. At the offertory, in Solemn High Mass, the priest implores the blessing of the Almighty upon the oblation *through the intercession of Saint Michael*. And during the canon of the Mass, after the Consecration, the priest prays God to command that the oblation be borne by the hands of His holy angel to His altar on high. The angel here referred to is doubtless the Archangel Michael. With loving solicitude he watches over all the tiny particles which fall from the consecrated Hosts at the time of Holy Communion, that they may not be lost or desecrated.

The liturgy also presents Saint Michael to us as the incense-bearer, standing beside the altar as our intercessor and the bearer of the Church's prayers before the throne of God. "An Angel stood near the altar of the temple, having a golden censer in his hand, and there was given to him much incense; and the smoke of the perfumes ascended before God." (*Offertory, Mass of Saint Michael*)

Christ, silent and veiled in the Holy Eucharist, and Christ, visible, and speaking to us in the person of the Pope - these are the two objects of Satan's inveterate hatred and rage. And these are also the two objects of Saint Michael's greatest devotion and solicitude. As he is the special protector of the Catholic Church, so also is he the special

guardian of her head, the Pope. Let us range ourselves under the banner of Saint Michael in fighting the battles of God, and repairing by prayer and good works, and by active zeal in the interests of Jesus, the many outrages and sacrileges committed against the Blessed Sacrament and the venerable person of Christ's Vicar by Satan, through his many satellites.

A Miraculous Rescue

In York, England, during the reign of the infamous Charles II, the convent of Saint Mary's was one day attacked by a furious mob. Some of the ruffians had already gained entrance to the cloister and amid curses and blasphemies were making their way toward the chapel, in order to outrage the Blessed Sacrament.

The superioress of the convent had obtained permission, during those perilous times, to remove the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle, in case of extreme danger, and to flee with It to safety. As the furious mob pressed into the convent, she hastened with her Sisters to the chapel. With trembling hands and reverential awe, she opened the tabernacle, grasped the ciborium, concealed it beneath her flowing mantle, and turned to flee. But at that moment the persecutors pressed into the corridor leading to the chapel and cut off all means of escape. After a moment's reflection, the superioress commanded the Sisters to place the statue of Saint Michael before the door of the chapel. At the same time she cried out with a loud voice: "Great God, protect Thyself, for we are no longer able to rescue Thee!"

The cursing, raging mob had already reached the open door of the chapel, when suddenly, in an inexplicable manner, the men shrank back astounded and stupefied before the

statue of Saint Michael. In a few moments not a single one of the intruders remained in the convent.

In thanksgiving for this miraculous rescue, the statue of Saint Michael was erected permanently at the entrance of the chapel, and the feast of the Archangel was celebrated each year with great solemnity. In addition, daily acts of gratitude were offered by the community in his honor.

At the End of Time

The thought of the day of judgment justly fills every thinking soul with a wholesome fear. God has mercifully concealed from us the day and the hour when this dread event shall occur. Our Lord Himself, after describing the terrors of the end of the world, said to His disciples: "But that day and hour no one knoweth, no, not even the angels of heaven, but the Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Nevertheless Our Lord foretold certain signs which would precede the consummation of the world and which should serve as a warning to mankind of its approach. These signs are described in the Gospel of Saint Matthew as follows:

"For many will come in My Name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. For you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. Take care that you do not be alarmed, for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be pestilences and famines and earthquakes in various places. . . . And then many will fall away, and will betray one another, and will hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will lead many astray. And because iniquity will abound the charity of many will grow cold." (Matthew 24:5-7, 10-12)

Although we can see in our own times conditions such as are here described, this does not necessarily imply that the end of the world is near at hand. Nevertheless we ought to take seriously to heart the critical condition of our present age and daily implore the mercy and the help of God. And since God Himself has appointed Saint Michael as the special defender and advocate of Christians against the Satanic powers, we ought to place ourselves with all confidence under his protection and daily invoke his aid for the Church and for immortal souls.

When the end of the world draws near, Saint Michael will wage a final battle against the Antichrist, who by false miracles will endeavor to seduce even the elect of God. Saint Michael will then defend the Church against frightful persecutions. This is foretold in the Book of Daniel (12:1), where the prophet, speaking of the end of the world and the Antichrist, says: "At that time shall Michael rise up, the great prince, who standeth for the children of Thy people! and a time shall come such as never was, from the time that nations began even until that time."

After this most valiant Archangel has once more conquered the prince of darkness and has cast him into the abyss of hell, he will sound the dread trumpet whose resonance will call the dead to life and summon all men to appear before the Eternal Judge, to receive their final sentence of reward or punishment. Happy shall we be if in that awful hour we find an advocate in the glorious Archangel Michael! If we would insure for ourselves the intercession of this powerful champion before the judgment seat of God, let us be faithful in invoking him.

Veneration of Saint Michael

According to Saint Alphonsus Liguori, veneration of the holy angels, and particularly of Saint Michael, is an outstanding sign of predestination. Saint Lawrence Justinian says: "Although we must honor all the angels, we ought in a very special manner to invoke the glorious Saint Michael as the prince of all the heavenly spirits because of his sublime dignity, his pre-eminent office, and his invincible power, which he proved in his conflict with Satan, as well as against the combined forces of hell." Again the same saint says; "Let all acknowledge Saint Michael as their protector, and be devout to him, for he cannot despise those who pray to him. . . but he guards them through life, directs them on their way, and conducts them to their eternal home."

Holy Church recognizes the exalted dignity and power of Saint Michael by the veneration which she pays to him. She has instituted two feasts in his honor - the Apparition of Saint Michael on May 8th, and the Dedication of Saint Michael or Michaelmas, on September 29th. Her liturgy for these feasts is replete with the praises of Saint Michael as the prince of the heavenly hosts and as the protector of the children of God.

Apparition of Saint Michael

The history of the feast of the Apparition of Saint Michael is very remarkable. In the year 404, a wealthy man had a large herd of cattle grazing on Monte Gargano in Italy, not far from the once famous city of Siponto. One day a steer went astray from the herd and did not return with the rest of the cattle at the usual time. The owner and his hired men went in search of the steer, and finally found him on the summit

of the mountain, lying at the entrance of a cave. The animal refused to leave the spot, and at length the owner, exasperated by its stubbornness, took up his bow and sent an arrow toward it. But lo! the arrow whirled about in the air, and, coming directly toward the archer, wounded him.

All were frightened at this strange incident, and no one ventured to approach the place. They went directly to the Bishop of Siponto and related the incident to him. The holy prelate, after serious reflection, decided that there must be some mystery connected with it. He therefore prayed fervently that God's holy will might be revealed. Thereupon Saint Michael appeared to him in great splendor and said: "I am Michael, the Archangel, who ever stand before the Lord. I am keeping this place under my special protection. By this strange occurrence, I wish to remind men to celebrate the Divine service in my honor and that of all the angels."

After this revelation, the bishop and all the inhabitants of the place went up the mountain in solemn procession, and prayed to the Lord through the intercession of Saint Michael. When they arrived at the cave, they found an entrance which led down a stairway. No one, however, ventured to enter, and they performed their devotions at the opening. After that many pilgrimages were made to this spot.

Meantime, the Neapolitans decided to make war upon the inhabitants of Siponto and Benevento. The latter, at the advice of their bishop, kept a three days' fast and called upon the assistance of the holy Archangel. During the night preceding the attack, the Archangel again appeared to the bishop and told him that God had listened to their petitions, that in the fourth hour of the day they should courageously meet the enemy, and they would gain the victory.

As soon as the attack began, all Monte Gargano was violently shaken. The entire summit was enveloped in dark clouds, from which flashes of lightning, like fiery arrows, flew toward the enemy, who, in consequence, took to flight. In joy and gratitude, and amidst devout prayer, the conquerors entered the sacred spot. They found the cavern to be perfectly formed for a church, which could hold about five hundred persons.

This cave had evidently been a place of refuge in which the early Christians had secretly kept their services during times of persecution. From a crevice in the rock, which formed the ceiling of this sanctuary, water dripped down upon the rocks. This water was very refreshing and most pleasant to the taste, and possessed healing properties. Many fever patients were instantly cured after drinking of this water; others who were sick found health, and many still obtain health through the intercession of Saint Michael. Many other miracles occurred in this place, proving that it was under the special protection of heaven. Beside this subterranean church the bishop erected another, in which the services were conducted by regular canons. This church still exists.

The Holy See, having been minutely informed of everything, ordained a special feast to commemorate this event, the feast of the Apparition of Saint Michael, celebrated on May 8th. The Mass of this feast is the same as that of the Dedication of Saint Michael on September 29th.

Dedication of Saint Michael

The principal feast of Saint Michael is that of Michaelmas Day, September 29th. As it is not certain just what church is commemorated as having been dedicated on this day, the pious belief has gained favor that the entire Catholic Church is here indicated. For, by casting the rebel spirits into the

abyss, Saint Michael dedicated the Church Triumphant in heaven as the peaceful abode of the angels, and as he wards off the devil and his colleagues from the Church upon earth, he has dedicated the Church Militant as the secure dwelling place of the faithful upon earth. This feast of Saint Michael has ever been one of the outstanding feasts of the Church. However, the liturgy for the feast is not confined to the veneration of Saint Michael alone, but includes all the angels, particularly those who are appointed as guardians of mankind.

Veneration in Past and Present Times

The Irish people have always held the captain of the heavenly host in great veneration as is evident from the number of ancient churches dedicated to him, and the frequency with which his name is given to their children. They termed him "*Adrigh na Aaingeal* - the high King of the Angels." Veneration of Saint Michael was at one time practiced so extensively in England that in the year 1114 King Ethelred ordained that the three days immediately preceding the feast of Saint Michael should be days of strict fast. In the Middle Ages, the knights, especially, consecrated themselves to Saint Michael. The German people, too, have long been fervently devoted to this holy Archangel. Devotion to Saint Michael is likewise gaining favor in our own country as is evidenced by the growing number of his clients.

In union with our veneration of Mary, the Queen of the angels, we ought to practice a fervent devotion to Saint Michael and repose firm confidence in his protection. Thus by daily devotion and earnest imitation we shall gain the powerful protection of this great Archangel in life and at the hour of death when the last great battle is being fought. And

when we have closed our eyes on the scenes of earth, he will lead us safely to the happiness of paradise.

Prayers

Mass for the Dedication of Saint Michael (September 29th)

Introit, Psalm 102 - Bless the Lord, all ye His angels: you that are mighty in strength, and execute His word, hearkening to the voice of His orders.

Psalm - Bless the Lord, O my soul; and let all that is within me bless His holy Name.

V. - Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Collect - O God, who, in a wonderful order, providest ministries both of angels and of men, grant in Thy mercy, that they who ever stand before Thy face to minister unto Thee in heaven may protect us during our life upon earth. Through our Lord. . . .

Lesson from the Apocalypse, chapter 1 - In those days: God signified the things which must shortly come to pass, and He sent and signified them through His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to whatever he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein; for the time is at hand. John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace be to you and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is coming, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To Him who has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own Blood.

Gradual - Bless the Lord, all you His angels: you that are mighty in strength, that do His will. Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless His holy Name. Alleluia, alleluia. Holy Archangel Michael, defend us in the battle: that we may not perish in the dreadful judgment. Alleluia.

Instead of the above, the following is said during Easter time:

Alleluia, alleluia. Holy Archangel Michael, defend us in the battle, that we may not perish in the dreadful judgment. Alleluia. The sea was shaken and the earth trembled when the Archangel Michael came down from heaven. Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew, chapter 18 - At that time: The disciples came to Jesus saying: "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And Jesus, calling a little child to Him, set it in the midst of them and said: "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoever, therefore, humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven: and whoever receives one such little child for My sake, receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it were better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of scandals! For it must needs be that scandals come; but woe to the man through whom scandal does come. And if thy hand or thy foot is an occasion of sin to thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter life maimed or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye is an occasion of sin to thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. It is better for thee

to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the hell of fire. See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, their angels in heaven always behold the Face of My Father who is in heaven."

Offertory: Apocalypse, chapter 8 - An angel stood near the altar of the temple, having a golden censer in his hand; and there was given to him much incense; and the smoke of the perfumes ascended before God.

Secret - We offer Thee a sacrifice of praise, O Lord, and humbly beseech Thee that, through the prayers of Thy holy angels who plead for us. Thou wouldst graciously receive it, and grant that it may avail us unto salvation. Through our Lord. . . .

Communion: Daniel 3 - All ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord: sing a hymn, and exalt Him above all forever.

Postcommunion - Supported by the intercession of blessed Michael, Thine Archangel, we humbly entreat Thee, O Lord, that the service we pay with our lips, we may lay hold of with our minds. Through our Lord. . . .

Prayer after Low Mass

Promulgated by Pope Leo XIII

Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle; be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and the other evil spirits who prowl about the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

For Help Against Spiritual Enemies

Glorious Saint Michael, Prince of the heavenly hosts, who standest always ready to give assistance to the people of God; who didst fight with the dragon, the old serpent, and didst cast him out of heaven, and now valiantly defendest the Church of God, that the gates of hell may never prevail against her: I earnestly entreat thee to assist me also, in the painful and dangerous conflict which I have to sustain against the same formidable foe. Be with me, O mighty Prince! that I may courageously fight and wholly vanquish that proud spirit, whom thou hast, by the Divine power, so gloriously overthrown, and whom our powerful King, Jesus Christ, has, in our nature, so completely overcome; to the end that, having triumphed over the enemy of my salvation, I may, with thee and the holy angels, praise the clemency of God, who, having refused mercy to the rebellious angels after their fall, has granted repentance and forgiveness to fallen man.

Prayer for Perseverance

O God, who didst render blessed Michael, Thy Archangel, victorious over the proud Lucifer and all the wicked spirits, we beseech Thee that, combating under the Cross and ever adopting his maxim, "Who is like unto God," we may be victorious over all our enemies, and delivered from all impediments. Do Thou regulate our lives according to Thy will and commandments. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

For Assistance at the Hour of Death

Glorious Archangel Saint Michael, do thou, by thy protection, enable my soul, enriched by grace, to become worthy of being presented by thy hand to Jesus Christ, my Judge, at the hour of my death. O holy Archangel, the devil has many weapons to employ against me at the last hour.

These weapons are my sins by which he will then endeavor to throw me into despair. He is also preparing furious assaults of temptations, to cause me then to fall into sin. Thou, who didst conquer him and didst expel him from heaven, conquer him again, and drive him far away from me at the hour of my death. I beseech thee to grant this prayer for the love of that God who so much loves thee and whom thou lovest so much. O Mary, Queen of heaven, procure for me the assistance of Saint Michael at the hour of my death.

For the Reign of the Sacred Heart

O Mary Immaculate, great Queen of heaven and earth and our gentle advocate, deign, we beseech thee, to intercede for us. Pray God to send Saint Michael and the holy angels to ward off all the obstacles contrary to the reign of the Sacred Heart in our souls, our families, our country and in the whole world.

And thou, O holy Michael, Prince of the heavenly hosts, from our hearts we beg thee to come to our aid.

Defend us against the rage of Satan; and through the Divine power bestowed upon thee by God, after securing victory for the Church here below, guide our souls to our eternal home. Amen.

Saint Michael, first champion of the Kingship of Christ, pray for us!

Novena to Saint Michael

A novena may be made at any time of the year, with any form of approved prayers. Many of the prayers given here may be used for this purpose, adding at the end: Obtain for

us aid in all our necessities, particularly (mention favor desired).

Indulgence of 5 years on each day. Plenary, once during the novena under the usual conditions. ("Manual of Indulgences")

Prayer to Saint Michael

Glorious Prince of the heavenly hosts and Victor over rebellious spirits, be mindful of me who am so weak and sinful and yet so prone to pride and ambition. Lend me, I pray, thy powerful aid in every temptation and difficulty, and above all do not forsake me in my last struggle with the powers of evil. Amen.

The Angelic Trisagion

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory.

Holy Archangel Michael, defend us in the battle, that we may not perish in the dreadful judgment.

Prayer for Protection of the Church and Her Members

O glorious Saint Michael, guardian and defender of the Church of Jesus Christ, come to the assistance of this Church, against which the powers of hell are unchained, guard with special care her august Head, and obtain that for him and for us the hour of triumph may speedily arrive. O glorious Archangel Saint Michael, watch over us during life, defend us against the assaults of the demon, assist us especially at the hour of death; obtain for us a favorable

judgment, and the happiness of beholding God face to face for endless ages. Amen.

Angelical Crown or Chaplet

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Before each salutation recite one *Our Father* and three *Hail Marys* in honor of the corresponding Choir of Angels.

First Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the heavenly choir of Seraphim, may it please God to make us worthy to receive into our hearts the fire of His perfect charity. Amen.

Second Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the heavenly choir of the Cherubim, may God grant us grace to abandon the ways of sin and follow the path of Christian perfection. Amen.

Third Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the heavenly choir of the Thrones, may it please God to infuse into our hearts a true and earnest spirit of humility. Amen.

Fourth Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the heavenly choir of the Dominations, may it please God to grant us grace to have dominion over our senses, and to correct our depraved passions. Amen.

Fifth Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the heavenly choir of the Powers, may God vouchsafe to keep our souls from the wiles and temptations of the devil. Amen.

Sixth Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the choir of the admirable celestial Virtues, may Our Lord keep us from falling into temptations and deliver us from evil. Amen.

Seventh Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the heavenly choir of the Principalities, may it please God to fill our hearts with the spirit of true and hearty obedience. Amen.

Eighth Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the heavenly choir of Archangels, may it please God to grant us the gift of perseverance in the faith and in all good works, that we may thereby be enabled to attain unto the glory of paradise. Amen.

Ninth Salutation - At the intercession of Saint Michael and the heavenly choir of holy Angels, may God vouchsafe to grant that they may protect us during life, and after death may lead us into the everlasting glory of heaven. Amen.

Then say the *Our Father* four times in conclusion: the first in honor of *Saint Michael*, the second in honor of *Saint Gabriel*, the third in honor of *Saint Raphael*, and the fourth in honor of your *Guardian Angel*. Then conclude with the following:

Saint Michael, glorious Prince, chief and champion of the heavenly host, guardian of the souls of men, conqueror of the rebel angels, steward of the palace of God under Jesus Christ, our worthy leader, endowed with superhuman excellence and virtue: vouchsafe to free us from every ill, who with full confidence have recourse to thee; and by thy incomparable protection enable us to make progress every day in the faithful service of our God. Amen.

V. Pray for us, most blessed Michael, Prince of the Church of Jesus Christ.

R. That we may be made worthy of His promises.

Let us pray: Almighty and eternal God, who in Thine own marvelous goodness and pity, didst, for the common salvation of men, choose the glorious Archangel Michael to be the Prince of Thy Church: make us worthy, we pray Thee, to be delivered by his beneficent protection from all our enemies, that, at the hour of our death; none of them may approach to harm us; rather do Thou vouchsafe unto us that by the same Archangel Michael we may be introduced into the presence of Thy most high and Divine Majesty. Through the merits of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Litany of Saint Michael

For private use

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Holy Mary, Queen of Angels, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, filled with the wisdom of God, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, perfect adorer of the Incarnate Word, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, crowned with honor and glory, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, most powerful Prince of the armies of the Lord, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, standard-bearer of the Most Holy Trinity, Pray for us.

Saint Michael, guardian of Paradise, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, guide and comforter of the people of Israel, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, splendor and fortress of the Church Militant, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, honor and joy of the Church Triumphant, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, light of angels, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, bulwark of orthodox believers, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, strength of those who fight under the standard of the Cross, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, light and confidence of souls at the hour of death, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, our most sure aid, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, our help in all adversities, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, herald of the everlasting sentence, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, consoler of souls detained in the flames of purgatory, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, whom the Lord hath charged to receive souls after death, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, our prince, Pray for us.
Saint Michael, our advocate, Pray for us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

V. Pray for us, O glorious Saint Michael, Prince of the Church of Jesus Christ.

R. That we may be made worthy of His promises.

Let us Pray: Sanctify us, we beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus, with Thy holy blessing, and grant us, by the intercession of Saint Michael, that wisdom which teaches us to lay up treasures in heaven by exchanging the goods of this world for those of eternity, Thou who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

Prayer for the Church and for Souls

recommended for frequent recitation in the present critical times

O glorious Archangel, Saint Michael, Prince of the heavenly host, be our defense in the terrible warfare which we carry on against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, the spirits of evil. Come to the aid of man, whom God has created immortal, made in His own image and likeness, and redeemed at a great price from the tyranny of the devil. Fight this day the battle of the Lord, together with the holy angels, as already thou hast fought the leader of the proud angels, Lucifer, and his apostate host, who were powerless to resist thee, nor was there place for them longer in heaven.

That cruel, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil or Satan, who seduces the whole world, was cast into the abyss with his angels. Behold, this primeval enemy and slayer of men has taken courage. Transformed into an angel of light, he wanders about with all the multitude of wicked spirits, invading the earth in order to blot out the Name of God and of His Christ, to seize upon, slay and cast into eternal perdition the souls destined for the crown of eternal glory. This wicked dragon pours out, as a most impure flood, the venom of his malice on men of depraved mind and corrupt

heart, the spirit of lying, of impiety, of blasphemy, and the pestilent breath of impurity, and of every vice and iniquity. These most crafty enemies have filled and inebriated with gall and bitterness the Church, the Spouse of the immaculate Lamb, and have laid impious hands on her most sacred possessions. In the Holy Place itself, where has been set up the See of the most holy Peter and the Chair of Truth for the light of the world, they have raised the throne of their abominable impiety, with the iniquitous design that when the pastor has been struck the sheep may be scattered.

Arise, then, O invincible Prince, bring help against the attacks of the lost spirits to the people of God, and give them the victory. They venerate thee as their protector and patron; in thee Holy Church glories as her defense against the malicious power of hell; to thee has God entrusted the souls of men to be established in heavenly beatitude. Oh, pray to the God of peace that He may put Satan under our feet, so far conquered that he may no longer be able to hold men in captivity and harm the Church. Offer our prayers in the sight of the Most High, so that they may quickly conciliate the mercies of the Lord; and beating down the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, do thou again make him captive in the abyss, that he may no longer seduce the nations. Amen.

V. Behold the Cross of the Lord; be scattered, ye hostile powers.

R. The Lion of the tribe of Juda has conquered, the root of David.

V. Let Thy mercies be upon us, O Lord.

R. As we have hoped in Thee.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer,

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

Let us Pray: O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon Thy holy Name, and as suppliants we implore Thy clemency, that by the intercession of Mary, ever Virgin immaculate and our Mother, and of the glorious Archangel Saint Michael, Thou wouldst deign to help us against Satan and all other unclean spirits, who wander about the world for the injury of the human race and the ruin of souls. Amen.

Grant us with Michael still, O Lord,
  Against the Prince of Pride to fight;
So may a crown be our reward,
  Before the Lamb's pure throne of light.

About This Ebook

The text of this ebook is taken from the book *'Neath Saint Michael's Shield* by the Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration of Clyde, Missouri. The edition used was printed in 1954.

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The cover image is a detail of a stained glass window apparently designed by Franz Reuter, date unknown. The window is in the church of Saint Thomas, Houverath, Bad Münstereifel, Germany. It was photographed on 1 August 2010 by Reinhardhauke, and the image swiped from Wikimedia Commons.

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